

REMARKS

The present invention relates to a method for manufacturing bleached mechanical and chemitheromomechanical pulp, involving a specific series of steps.

Preliminarily, before discussing the Office Action and the response thereto in detail, it is noted that claims 1, 11, and 12 are amended herein responsive to various points noted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully submit that these amendments are proper for entry as placing the claims in condition for allowance, or at least in more appropriate condition for appeal by reducing the number of issues.

Turning to the Office Action in more detail, the Examiner maintained a rejection of claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement, including with respect to the recitation “through at least one refiner. . . , being in series” in claim 1. The rejection of claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) was maintained based on Lowrie et al in view of Madison et al and Grimsley et al and West. With respect to the previous argument, the Examiner again refer to the recitation “at least one refiner” as not being the argued “more than one refiner in series”. The Examiner also indicated issues with respect to the distinctions of the present invention vis-à-vis the prior art with respect to the bleaching. Lastly, the Examiner suggested deletion of a term in claim 11, and that a redundant recitation in claim 12 should be deleted.

In this Amendment, claims 1, 11, and 12 have been amended responsive to the Examiner’s comments. Applicants furthermore respectfully submit that in view of the amendments both of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) have

been overcome, and therefore the Amendment should be entered and the claims allowed forthwith.

With respect to the Examiner's apparent question regarding the number of refiners, as the Examiner has noted, Figure 1 illustrates an embodiment of the invention wherein there are two refiners. However, Figure 1 is illustrative of the present invention and not limiting. In that regard, it is noted that among the references cited by the Examiner is U.S. Patent 3,467,574 (West), which shows three refiners in series (viz. 16, 26, and 34). West uses also a steam separation between the refiners, and the Examiner's attention is directed to column 5, line 16-19 thereof.

"This pulp is dropped into enclosed sump 20 located beneath refiner 16 via duct 21. Sump 20 is vented to the atmosphere by suitable valve means, not shown." (emphasis added)

Furthermore, enclosed herewith is a copy of a press release dated July 2, 2002, wherein it is stated.

"Currently, Port Hawkesbury has two lines of three-stage RTSTM refining producing 800 tonnes/day of bleached pulp for the SCA paper machine and 200 tonnes/day of unbleached pulp for the newsprint machine. (emphasis added.

In the foregoing description it is noted that "SCA" means supercalendered, and such paper is commonly used as journal paper. It is clear therefrom the reference to "three-stage RTSTM refining" (TM apparently means "Trade Mark") that it is known to use multiple refiners, specifically three, and there is no appropriate basis for unduly limiting the scope of the

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. APPLN. NO. 09/914,650

present invention to only a two refiner embodiment. Furthermore, claim 1 has been amended to use a recitation that the Examiner may consider more appropriate, and which a skilled artisan would understand to mean that the single refining stage can utilize multiple refiners with each refiner being followed by steam separation.

In view of the Amendments to the claims and the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and 103 should now be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of amended claims 1-12 of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

Louis Gubinsky / by Joseph Ruckf
Louis Gubinsky
Registration No. 24,835
Reg. No. 26,577